

much new information has appeared in recent years, apparently too late for incorporation in this book. It was perhaps fitting that my copy of the book should have been attacked and partially eaten by an aggrieved grey kangaroo that broke into my room on Kangaroo Island, South Australia, where I was trying to write this review!

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Hazards and Errors in Anaesthesia

D A Buxton Hopkin pp 296 £11

Berlin: Springer 1980

Two objectives are described in the preface of this book – to inform beginners on the pitfalls and hazards of anaesthesia and to help the occasional anaesthetist confronted with unfamiliar problems. The first part of the book covers preoperative assessment and considers the influence of various disease states on the conduct of anaesthesia. This is followed by a section dealing with problems that can arise with equipment, drugs and various specialized techniques. There is then a short section on the problems of emergency surgery. The last and longest part of the book describes anaesthetic techniques for individual procedures.

How well does the author succeed in his task? The main objective is commendably laudable, for constant concern over the possibility of minor mishaps is the best way to avoid major disasters. The field covered is wide and of necessity the treatment of it is superficial – the beginner will learn some of the problems that can occur but not all the reasons why. The virtual lack of reference makes it difficult for the uninformed reader to decide what here is accepted doctrine and what the personal belief of the author. In the last portion of the book the author describes his own methods of anaesthetic management, many of which differ from current accepted practice. Thus chlorpromazine, a drug which plays a small role in the armamentarium of most anaesthetists, is mentioned more than forty times, whilst there are only two brief references to fentanyl. Whilst the techniques here described have obviously worked well in the author's hands, they are not for the beginner or the occasional anaesthetist.

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Hypertension. P M Dalal & Hypertension Study Group pp 58 US\$3 (Rupees 20)

Bombay: Sir Hurkisondas Nurrotumdas Hospital Medical Research Society 1980

This is a straightforward and readable account of the first genuinely representative survey of arterial pressure in urban India. The achievement of over

90% response rate in a screen of over 6000 men and women, aged over 20 years living in a socially mixed area of old Bombay, is very remarkable and the text reflects well both the excitement and disappointments of work of this kind. Involvement of the local population and of local health workers, including family doctors, is a consistent theme. Measurements were made carefully and were well standardized, and the distributions of arterial pressure found differ only marginally from those found in similar studies in Britain, the United States, Nigeria and Taiwan, confirming yet again that racial differences are small compared with the effects of urbanization and industrialization, however these may be caused.

It is a pleasure to read a book that is thoroughly practical and altogether free from speculation. The survey appears to be a first step toward controlling the raised pressures that are found, which in the social and cultural conditions described will be extremely difficult.

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Advances in Shock Research

Vol 3 A M Lefer *et al.* (ed) pp 316 US\$34

Vol 4 W Schumer *et al.* (ed) pp 232 US\$26

New York: Alan Liss 1980

These two volumes contain the proceedings of the Second Annual Conference on Shock held in the USA in 1979. Those interested in shock and the responses to injury should read these volumes, not least for the way in which they illustrate the differences in approach to this subject on the two sides of the Atlantic. Out of 41 contributions, 16 seem to have come from physiology departments and 19 from departments of surgery. The picture presented is very different from the one that would probably be seen at a meeting on this subject in the United Kingdom.

In addition to haemorrhagic shock the main emphasis is on the experimental study of shock due to sepsis, endotoxin and superior mesenteric artery occlusion. These would be unusual subjects for investigation in physiology departments in the UK. The type of research described has, in many cases, a very pharmacological approach. Attempts have been made to influence the course and outcome of these injuries by giving nucleotides, allopurinol, leucine, naloxone, methylprednisolone, ibuprofen, indomethacin, prostaglandins, etc., and by altering the activity of the reticuloendothelial system.

Are we missing anything through not, for the most part, engaging in this type of research? It is difficult to say. The results reported in these two volumes do not seem to be pointing clearly

towards any therapeutic advance. Nevertheless, the possibility should not be lightly discarded and people would do well to examine the work described here. The reasons for these national differences in the pathway, and volume, of research on injury are probably related to differences in the character of trauma in the two countries. Here it is mainly musculoskeletal, whereas in the USA the greater level of severe violence leads to many more gunshot and other penetrating wounds with their septic complications. In such an environment it is understandable that there should be a heightened interest in haemorrhage and the effects of bacterial products.

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Running a Practice: a manual of practice management. 2nd edn R V H Jones *et al.*
pp 229 £7.95 London: Croom Helm 1981

'Running a Practice' has all the makings of a multi-edition best seller, and is already in a second edition after three years. It is based on a successful course for general practice trainees in Exeter, and written by the four practitioners who organized it.

The book is devised sensibly. Its seven parts cover the nature of practice and the practitioner, the premises, the practice workers, money matters, documentation, organization, relations with other parts of the NHS and a concluding section on choosing a practice.

The paperback is easy to read and full of information and sound advice for general practice trainees and trainers.

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Proceedings of Meeting on Abortion Counselling held at The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, London, 5 July 1978 pp 50 75p London: The Birth Control Trust 1980

This short publication contains eight papers. They present a comprehensive review of the problems inherent in abortion counselling – what should it be and who needs it, who should give it and how should they be trained? I do not think that the first two questions are answered clearly and this reduces the impact of the remaining contributions. There is inevitably some repetition and disagreement, the latter notable in relation to the selection and training of counsellors.

Anyone interested or involved in the care or counselling of those with unwanted pregnancy will find this publication of interest and it will heighten awareness of the problems that may arise even if the meeting leaves us unsure of the value of

abortion counselling. It is surprising to find Dr Brewer referring to obstetricians as happy to act as technicians in obstetrics; I do not believe this to be true and perhaps there is need for examination of the extent to which technical medical procedure should be divorced from counselling, consultation and decision making. The publication of these papers will be welcomed but a summary of the conclusions of the meeting, perhaps based on discussion between speakers, would have increased the value of the book.

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Mummies, Disease and Ancient Cultures
A & E Cockburn (ed) pp 340 £25

Cambridge University Press 1980

During the past decade, interest has grown to a remarkable extent in paleopathology – the study of disease in ancient human remains. The stimulus has been the splendid teamwork in Manchester and other centres where enthusiasts from the medical diagnostic specialities have cooperated closely with Egyptologists, reconstructive artists and experts from many other fields. Radiology, histology (including electron microscopy), serology and biochemistry have been particularly valuable areas of enquiry. Some of the spectacular results of these detailed investigations are now presented under the editorship of Aidan and Eve Cockburn.

The extensive work on Egyptian mummies provides remarkable insights into the occurrence, over 4000 years ago, of parasitic infestations, tuberculosis and smallpox, as well as trauma and conditions ranging from periodontal to coronary artery disease in the rulers of ancient Egypt. A new and literal meaning is now given to the statement in Exodus (VII. 14) that 'Pharaoh's heart is hardened'. The reader then travels from Egypt to sites as far apart as Peru, the South Pacific Islands, China, Japan, Australia, New Guinea, Scandinavia, Siberia and the lands of the Eskimos. Examples of the additional diseases identified include lobar pneumonia (probably due to *Klebsiella pneumoniae*), mastoiditis, bartonellosis (verruca) and breast cancer. Although the quality of some of the photographs is disappointing, many of the images are extremely vivid – for example, the scanning electron micrographs of 3000-year-old blood corpuscles or the picture of the 2000-year-old Tollund 'bog man' whose facial composure is astonishing, particularly as he had just been strangled to death with a rope. This is indeed a fascinating and exciting book.

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